



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

T - 03 - 04

For Immediate Release
January 14, 2004

Contact: Angela Blanchette
510.540.3732
Ron Baker
916.324.3142

DTSC Certifies Gelsar Site

Berkeley - - The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) today announced certification of the hazardous substances cleanup at the Gelsar site in Hercules. The certification allows for unrestricted land use and redevelopment of most of the property. The 106-acre site, also known as Sycamore Crossing, is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of San Pablo and Sycamore Avenues.

DTSC's certification means that all environmental clean up activities required by the cleanup plan approved in September 2000 are complete. The site is now suitable for unrestricted development and wetlands preserve.

The Gelsar site is one of many brownfields throughout California where DTSC has supervised the cleanup and certified the property for reuse. Brownfields are agricultural, industrial, or abandoned properties that are contaminated or thought to be contaminated, and are underutilized due to cleanup costs liability concerns.

"We are pleased to see the Gelsar site cleaned up and available for redevelopment after more than 30 years of dormancy," said DTSC Director Ed Lowry. "Restoring brownfields to productive use is a top priority for DTSC."

The Gelsar site was a portion of the former 1,300 acre explosives manufacturing facility owned and operated by Hercules Powder Company from 1879 to mid 1970s. The site consists of 106 acres of vacant land, including approximately 34 acres of wetlands area and creek corridors. All manufacturing activities at the site ceased in the 1960s, and it has been vacant since then.

Site investigations in 1983 found contamination in upland soils and sediments in the western wetlands area. Contaminants detected included: cadmium, copper, lead, zinc, trinitrotoluene (TNT), dinitrotoluene (DNT) and dinitrobenzene (DNB).

In September 1999, the former property owner, Remediation Financial, entered into a Voluntary Cleanup Agreement with DTSC to perform additional investigations and cleanup at the site. The DTSC-approved cleanup plan required excavation of contaminated soils and sediments to meet unrestricted and wetlands use standards.

Approximately 3,200 cubic yards of contaminated soils were excavated from upland areas and approximately 17 cubic yards of contaminated sediments were excavated from the wetlands. The excavated materials were disposed offsite at permitted facilities.

Current redevelopment plans for the site include 372 residential units and 195,000 square feet of commercial space.

#

The Department of Toxic Substances Control's mission is to restore, protect, and enhance the environment and ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.